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Africa Before Europe Reading Interpretation

Global Studies Honors Pd. 9/10

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1. Africa is a large continent with varying climates in many different regions. It has hot, dry summers and warm wet winters. Camels are needed to cross the deserts. Depending on the altitude the area can be cold. The grasslands are home to large grazing animals.
2. Mount Kilimanjaro has snow on it year round, it’s 19,340 ft high. Rift Valley is a 2000 mile long gash caused by shifting continents. In the rocky sides of the Rift Valley, archaeologists have found early forms of human life. The skeleton known as Lucy was found in Ethiopia along the Rift Valley.
3. There’s a rainforest that runs parallel with the equator. There is rain every day and it’s always hot. It has a high canopy and a relatively clear floor. The rainforest has wide variety of animals and vegetation. The soil in the forest is generally not very fertile. The tsetse fly carries a deadly disease that kills cattle and horses, while the mosquito carries malaria.
4. The rivers aren’t very good for transportation, because they have many falls and rapids. The coast is relatively good for harbors but only the east coast developed coastal trade. As the trade developed, the people developed a language called Swahili.
5. Cush people were upstream from the Egyptians. For some time the Cush conquered the Egyptians and ruled as pharaohs. They developed hieroglyphics that have not yet been translated.
6. Sudan was home to some of the most impressive cultures. The Kingdom of Ghana was astride a very rich trading route. Northern Africans brought salt to the South Africans, who in turn gave them gold. West Africa had a lot of gold; it may have given 2/3 of the world its gold. The king of Ghana claimed all gold nuggets.
7. Mali came to power when Ghana fell. Mali was rich and influence by Islam. Mansa Musa, king, went to Mecca, escorted by 500 slaves. He gave/spent so much of his gold, that it lost its value.
8. Near the West Coast archaeologists have found terra-cotta sculpture heads. They are part of the Nok culture, which is considered the earliest culture.
9. South of the Zambezi River is a collection of ruins known as Zimbabwe. The buildings are very large, and at one time the people who inhabited these buildings mined gold and traded it.
10. Africans have developed rich and complex cultures. Some were thought to be the richest on earth. The artistic talents and their intellectual achievements are compared to Europeans of the same time.